National/International Airports in HP

†*73. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals received from Himachal Pradesh for national/ international airports which are pending with Government; and

(b) the details of the locations thereof alongwith the status of each proposal?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) and (b) No request for national/international airports received from Himachal Pradesh is pending with the Government.

Fall in prices of coffee

*74. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the steep fall in prices of coffee; and

(b) if so, the details of action taken to contain such fall in prices to protect the coffee growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Yes, Sir. In the recent months, due to surplus coffee production by producing countries leading to a mismatch between demand and supply, the prices of coffee both in global and domestic markets have been witnessing a downward trend. As such coffee growers are not getting the same price for their produce which they were getting 2-3 years ago.

(b) With the liberalisation of coffee industry, the trade is in the private hands and the prices of coffee are determined by the market forces of demand and supply. However for the benefit of coffee growers, the Govt. of India through Coffee Board has been operating several plan schemes under which various types of financial and technical assistance are provided to the growers. Further thrust is being given for increasing productivity of coffee particularly in small grower sector and improving quality of the product to achieve competitiveness in the international market. The Board is also encouraging large growers to produce speciality coffee which fetches attractive premium in the developed countries. All these steps are expected to stablize the prices in the long run and ensure remunerative return to the growers.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

In addition, at the behest of Govt. of India, the commercial banks have rescheduled the crop loans of coffee growers and are also extending fresh loans to them. The Board is also implementing an interest relief scheme, which provides 5% interest relief to targetted small coffee growers on their working capital loans availed from the banks. The Govt. of India has also approved a transportation cost relief scheme to provide financial support of Rs. 500/- per ton to coffee exporters for reducing the handling costs.

Coffee Board has also started implementing a medium-term export strategy to sustain and gain market share in the key markets and also to improve the competitiveness of Indian Coffee in the global markets over the next few years.

Accounts of terrorist organisations

*75. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has asked banks in the country to keep a watch on the transactions of 23 organisations identified by Government as terrorist outfits;

(b) whether any doubtful transaction had come to the notice of Government; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) RBI has not reported any doubtful transaction so far about these accounts.

Visit to Taj Mahal and other tourist sites by disabled persons

*76. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Taj Mahal and other tourist sites of the country are inaccessible and unfriendly to the disabled and physically challenged persons; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to set right such inconveniences?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Some of the selected monuments including the Taj Mahal